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FOREIGN NOTES

PARIS SCHOOL OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The Paris School of Anthropology opened on November 3d for its thirty-third year with a corps of eight professors, three associate professors, and four lecturers. Courses will be offered as follows: L. Capitan, professor, Prehistoric Anthropology. G. Hervé, professor, Ethnology. P. G. Mahoudeau, professor, The Genealogy of Man; Anthropoids; Hominians. L. Manouvrier, professor, Physiological Anthropology. A. de Mortillet, professor, A Comparative Study of Primitive Industry, both Ancient and Modern. G. Papillault, professor, Sociology. F. Schrader, professor, Anthropological Geography. S. Zaborowski, professor, Ethnography (Italy, The Balkans, Greece). R. Dussaud, associate professor, The Ancient Peoples of Asia Minor. J. Huguet, associate professor, General Ethnology (The Berbers). E. Rabaud, associate professor, Embryogeny and Anatomy. R. Verneau, lecturer, Fossil Man in Europe and America. R. Anthony, lecturer, Vestigial Structures in Man. H. Pieron, lecturer, Psychometry and Ethnic Psychology. A. Marie, lecturer, Physical and Mental Degeneracy.

G. G. MACCURDY.

BIRD-BOLAS AMONG THE EASTERN ESKIMO

In a description of the Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay¹ I described a number of bone objects collected by Captain George Comer on Southampton island, which were explained to him by the Eskimo as buttons for closing women's belts. I expressed the opinion that, since many of these specimens were found together, and since all the perforations are near the narrow end of the specimens and do not allow of a stout thong passing through, they are more likely to be bird-bolas such as are known from Alaska. In a letter from Cape Fullerton, dated July 6, 1908, Captain Comer corroborates this view. He writes:

"I wish to acknowledge that you were right in regard to the use of the bola or sling among the Southampton island natives. It is, as you are aware, the custom to place near the head of a grave, under stones, such implements as a person has used in life. At one grave at

¹ *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, xv, 396.

Southampton island I found, placed with the harpoons and arrowheads, three of these round pieces of bone, each having a small hole in it. An Iglulik native accompanied me, who said that his grandfather had told him that these bones were used in capturing large birds.

“There was another custom peculiar to these people. They fastened a piece of bone, six or eight inches long and about a pound in weight, across the heavy thong to which the dogs were harnessed. They claim that when the dogs start to pull, this decreases the strain on the dogs’ harness.

“I am also told that the natives of King’s cape were in the habit of coming over to Bell island, which is part of Southampton island, to trade with the natives.”

FRANZ BOAS.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION MEETING

The 1908 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was held in Dublin, September 3 to 9. During the meeting many papers of unusual interest were read before the Anthropological Section, which met at the Royal College of Physicians. In *Man* for October, 1908, appears a brief account of the meeting, together with summaries of various papers, several of which are given below:

J. P. DROOP: *Neolithic Culture in Northern Greece*.—Recent exploration of the neolithic culture of northern Greece has shown that the plain districts of southern Pelasgiotis, Thessaliotis, Phthiotis, Malis, and Phocis were inhabited from an early date by three peoples alike in culture, and near akin, but distinguishable by the varying style of their painted pottery. The stone implements consist of celts (sometimes bored), rubbers, and polishers; while obsidian chips are much more frequent than flint. Traces of eight successive settlements show that the period of painted pottery gradually passed, after the fourth settlement, into a period of unpainted polished ware. The eighth neolithic settlement is roughly dated to 1300 B.C. by the presence of important Mycenaean sherds. A series of tombs sunk into the remains of this eighth settlement indicates a subsequent poor bronze period. Thus, during the development of the Ægean bronze culture the north of Greece was still in an Age of Stone, and used bronze only at a comparatively late date, and presumably but for a short while before the introduction of iron. The date at which these neolithic peoples brought in their comparatively high culture may be placed in the middle of the third millennium.

PROFESSOR G. ELLIOT SMITH: *Anthropological Work in Egypt*.—The earliest known human remains found in the Nile valley, when com-

pared with those of later times, demonstrate the fact that in predynastic times Egypt and Nubia were inhabited by one and the same race, which has persisted in Egypt with little or no change in physical characteristics throughout the intervening 6000 years until the present day. On the whole they share the characteristics which distinguish the majority of the peoples fringing the Mediterranean. The physical characters of the population are remarkably uniform; they exhibit a range of variation, which is not appreciably greater than that of the present races known to us, though, of course, it is easy to select the extremes of these variations and call them "coarse" and "fine" types or "negroid" and "non-negroid" strains. As we should expect, there is some slight evidence of an infusion of black blood, but this is very small in amount, and its effects very much slighter and less widely diffused than is commonly supposed to be the case. The negro influence is least marked, if indeed it is not a negligible factor, in the earliest predynastic times; but it becomes more and more pronounced in later, and especially so in modern times. From the time of the earliest Egyptian dynasties a noteworthy change occurs in the physical characteristics of the people of Nubia, and, though in a very much slighter degree, in Lower Egypt. The inroad of negroes from the South leads to the transformation of the Nubian population into a hybrid race. And there is some evidence to show that even at the time of the Pyramid builders there was some influx of an alien race from the Levant, which intermingled with the predominant Egyptian population of the Delta. Three thousand years later a much greater immigration of people presenting the same alien characteristics poured into Egypt and Nubia. From this time onward these foreign immigrants came to Egypt in a constant stream.

PROFESSOR G. ELLIOT SMITH: *The History of Mummification in Egypt*. — In predynastic times in Egypt it was the custom to bury the bodies of the dead in the sand, roughly wrapped in skins, linen, or matting. As the result of the dryness of the soil, and the exclusion of the air by the close adaptation of the sand to the body, desiccation often occurred before any putrefactive changes set in, and the corpse thus became preserved in a permanent form. Thus the idea must have naturally presented itself to the Egyptian people, perhaps in early dynastic times, to attempt to secure by art the preservation of their dead, which was no longer attained naturally, once it became the custom to put the body into a coffin or a rock-cut chamber, because the air thus buried with the corpse favored putrefaction. The Egyptians would be encouraged in these attempts, to which they no doubt were prompted by their religious beliefs

no less than by the natural inclination of all mankind to preserve the remains of those dear to them, by the help which the properties of their soil and climate afforded them, as well as by their knowledge of the properties of the preservative salts, found ready at hand in such abundance in Egypt, and of the resins obtained from neighboring lands, with the properties of which they had been familiar even in predynastic times. In this way the origin of the idea, the reason for attempting to put it into practice, and the means for doing so become intelligible to us. We have no exact data to permit us to say exactly when embalming was first attempted in Egypt. Although the earliest bodies certainly known to have been embalmed are of the period of the tenth dynasty (found at Sakkara by Mr Quibell), there is some slight evidence to suggest that some form of mummification was attempted in the times of the earliest Pyramid builders. By the time of the Middle Empire the general technique of the operation had attained the stage which in its main features was the conventional procedure for the succeeding 2000 years. But it was in the time of the New Empire that the process of mummification reached its highest development. Further stages in the evolution of the art of embalming were followed by a rapid decline.